

Message Text

SECRET

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50

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 AID-20

CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 CU-04 OMB-01 DRC-01 /100 W

----- 026206

O R 151140Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3293

INFO AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL UDORN

AMCONSUL SONGKHLA

CINCPAC

DIA

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

S E C R E T BANGKOK 7908

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH

SUBJ: CABINET RESIGNATION RUMORS

REF : A. FBIS D150249Z MAY 74; B. FBIS D150900Z MAY 74;

C. FBIS D150905Z MAY 74

SUMMARY: DEPUTY MINISTER OF EDUCATION BUNSOM MARTIN'S PROBLEM WITH PRIVATE SCHOOL TEACHERS HAS STIMULATED ANOTHER ROUND OF CABINET RESIGNATION RUMORS. THE PRIME MINISTER AND GENERAL KRIT SIWARA'S TRIP TO VISIT THE KING AT HUA HIN MAY 15 ADDED TO THE ATMOSPHERICS. THE ENTIRE CIRCUMSTANCE UNDERLINES THE PRIME MINISTER'S VACILLATION, BUT WE EXPECT SANYA TO RETURN FROM HUA HIN STILL IN OFFICE. END SUMMARY.

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1. FIRED PRIVATE SCHOOL TEACHERS HAVE RECENTLY

DEMONSTRATED AGAINST DEPUTY MINISTER OF EDUCATION BUNSOM MARTIN BECAUSE HE HAS NOT FULFILLED AN EARLIER PROMISE TO SEE THAT THEY ARE REHIRED. SINCE THE ENTIRE ISSUE IS COMPLEX AND VIRTUALLY INSOLVABLE, BUNSOM SOUGHT TO TENDER HIS RESIGNATION LAST WEEK.

2. REFERENCES A, B, AND C REPORT THAT THE CABINET DISCUSSED BUNSOM'S ATTEMPTED RESIGNATION JF ITS MAY 14 MEETING. THESE CONTRADICTORY ACCOUNTS INDICATE THAT THE CABINET DID NOT MAKE A DECISION ON THE RESIGNATION. WHILE THE CABINET MEMBERS MAY BE SYMPATHETIC TO BUNSOM'S PROBLEMS, THEY ARE PROBABLY RELUCTANT TO LET HIM QUIT BECAUSE OF PRIME MINISTER SANYA THAMMASAK'S PROCLIVITY THAT ALL OR NONE MUST RESIGN.

3. REFERENCE B NOTES THAT SANYA AND GENERAL KRIT SIWARA LEFT BANGKOK FOR A CALL ON THE KING AT HUA HIN MAY 15. SANYA WAS SCHEDULED TO OBTAIN THE KING'S SIGNATURE ON GOVERNMENT PAPERS. THIS IS THE SECOND OR THIRD TIME THAT RESIGNATION RUMORS COINCIDED WITH A CALL ON THE KING. A SOURCE CLOSE TO THE KING TOLD US THAT SANYA HAS RECENTLY TURNED DOWN SEVERAL OF THE KING'S INVITATIONS TO TRAVEL WITH HIM IN THE COUNTRYSIDE BECAUSE THE PRESS AND THE PUBLIC WOULD IMMEDIATELY INTERPRET THEIR MEETING AS ANOTHER SANYA ATTEMPT TO RESIGN.

4. COMMENT: THE CABINET'S HANDLING OF THE BUNSOM RESIGNATION ISSUE EXPOSES ITS VACILLATION AND THE INDECISIVENESS OF THE GOVERNMENT ON THIS AND OTHER ISSUES. THE CONSENSUS OF THE THAI ELITE IS THAT SANYA IS AN ADMIRABLE MAN BUT A WEAK GOVERNMENT LEADER. BUT THEY ALSO SEE NO CIVILIAN CANDIDATE ON THE IMMEDIATE HORIZON TO FILL THE PRIME MINISTERIAL ROLE OTHER THAN KHUKRIT PRAMOT. KHUKRIT HAS ANNOUNCED, HOWEVER, THAT HE WILL BECOME PRIME MINISTER ONLY THROUGH ELECTIONS, AND TOLD THE SOURCE MENTIONED IN PARAGRAPH 3 THAT HE ABSOLUTELY WOULD NOT ACCEPT THE JOB NOW. WE THUS EXPECT SANYA TO RETURN FROM HUA HIN STILL IN OFFICE. KRIT MADE CLEAR TO US NOT LONG AGO THAT HE WOULD NOT BECOME PRIME MINISTER HIMSELF AT THIS JUNCTURE. WE THUS CAN ONLY
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SPECULATE THAT KRIT ACCOMPANIED SANYA TO HUA HIN TO OBTAIN ROYAL PERMISSION TO FLEX SOME OF THE PEACEKEEPING POWER THE CABINET HAS ACCORDED HIM, OR, MORE LIKELY, TO BOLSTER SANYA'S MORALE.
MASTERS.

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NNN

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